

What will happen to my loved ones if

.... I can't work

The Branch may be able to help ensure you get any sick pay you're entitled to, explain furlough and where possible ask your employer to enable you to work from home

Contact us on 07716 558647 or email lincshealthbranch@gmail.com

<https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/financial-assistance/>

Unison's charity There For You may be able to help with benefits advice or even direct financial assistance.

.... I die

We have already lost members nationally to COVID-19, UNISON will continue to put pressure on employers, and the government to ensure all our members and key workers are as safe as possible while you continue to fight this disease on the front lines of our health and social care services. There are also practical ways we can help you and your family in the event of death.

<https://lincolnshirehealth.unison.site/member-resources/>

UNISON members are entitled to a death benefit paid to their family provided they've been a member for 4 weeks and not in arrears at the time of their death.

UNISON members have access to a FREE will writing service.

<https://lincolnshirehealth.unison.site/member-resources/>

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UNISON may be able to help with funeral costs through direct grants and support through partner's such as Down to Earth to reduce the cost of funeral arrangements. There is a practical guide to funeral planning on our website

April/May 2020



UNISON Demands Safer Working Conditions

UNISON has been working flat-out to act on your concerns relating to the supply and application of Personal Protective Equipment across the health service, as well as make sure that your rights at work are respected during the pandemic.

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PPE: DO NOT Put Your Life At Risk

UNISON's advice is quite clear: no health workers should be working without correct PPE.

If you feel you are being put at risk and not being given the minimum PPE as set out by Public Health England you should:

1. Immediately withdraw from undertaking the work that puts you at risk (you will be protected under section 44 of the employment rights act).
2. Email your manager and ask why you are not getting the PPE you need.
3. Seek advice from your UNISON Branch so the issue can be escalated and you are provided with the correct PPE and a safe way of working can be established.

You can also report your concerns via UNISON's whistleblowing page here: <https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/trouble-getting-personal-protection-equipment-ppe>

Need help? Avoid contacting reps directly.

Please use the details below;


Our email: lincshealthbranch@gmail.com

Our number: 07716558647

Our office hours: 9am –5pm, Monday– Friday

@LincsHealth 

[lincs_health_unison](#) 

Unison Lincolnshire 

UNISON Members Win For Everyone!

Liz Lowe, Branch Secretary

A key part of the national pandemic response is to get as many people as possible to work from home in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community and in our workplaces.

Nowhere is this more important than in our NHS – where we must safeguard our front-line, patient facing staff from infection so that they are able to support and treat the patients coming through our doors.

At United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust the movement towards homeworking has been inconsistent and slow, this is an issue UNISON raised many times with the executive team and we received assurances that IT infrastructure was being upgraded and progress was being made in getting as many people as possible to do their work from home.

However we were also getting reports from members regarding local department discussions about working from home that just didn't match up with what we were being told at executive level. With office space across ULHT sites being at a premium many members were complaining that they were unable to socially distance at work, leaving them feeling anxious that they would get sick or take the virus home to their families.

Last week UNISON members in the Cancer Services department at Lincoln and Pilgrim hospitals came together and submitted a collective grievance on this issue. Within 48 hours of receiving this grievance ULHT started taking steps to centralise the roll-out for home working, subsequently staff across the Trust have now been informed whether or not they will be able to work from home entirely, partially or not at all. Shortly all staff identified as being able to work at home should be provided with the correct equipment and access to do so, protecting themselves and their colleagues who still need to come into our hospitals to deliver patient care and essential support services.

By standing together UNISON members in Cancer Services have driven improvement for staff across ULHT – so while we will continue to keep an eye on the situation and ensure the necessary equipment is put in place, it is only right that we take a moment to celebrate their achievement.

These UNISON members provide a great example of what trade unionism is – workers coming together to improve safety and conditions for everyone in their workforce.

I am extremely proud to be their Branch Secretary.



A Letter From LPFT

Richard Holmes, LPFT Lead Convenor

Staff in LPFT, in response to COVID-19, continue to go above and beyond to adapt to ever changing circumstances, many on a daily basis whilst endeavouring to provide support to colleagues and patients, with an unprecedented conscientiousness and consideration.

As demand on provision of services has increased, the majority of teams now who would have been typically a five-day service have adapted to shifting needs to provide wraparound support seven-days-a-week, including many of the Trust's community and corporate services. Staff have embraced this fundamental, and have given an understanding to this, as this will be key in containing the spread of the virus, avoiding hospital admission and preserving resources for those in urgent need.

The Trust has an incident control (ICC) team for COVID-19 in operation, which is a dedicated management cell monitoring the national situation and guidance, and coordinating the Trust response. There is daily meeting, every lunchtime of all the team leads, including staff side, involved in coordinating the Trust response. All unions, including UNISON continue to funnel enquiries and concerns through the ICC on behalf of their members as and when they arise.

The Trust have encouraged staff to look after their own health and wellbeing during this time and to continue to use annual leave to allow them time to rest and recuperate as this is important to maintain resilience. As part of this process LPFT Staff Wellbeing Service have brought on board a seven day a week staff emotional wellbeing helpline, which is there to listen to any concerns or worries that staff may have at this time that are impacting on them emotionally.



UNISON Securing Safe Working Hours

NHS staff can not be expected to make up for the erosion of real terms staffing numbers over the last decade, which have been made all the more apparent during the COVID 19 event.

Concerns over staffing levels have been raised by UNISON both locally nationally in the past but have been disregarded, creating the unfortunate situation we had always feared would happen in which increasing the workload on already overstretched and under resourced staff is leading to a dangerous downward spiral of more staff going off sick and leaving the NHS making the situation worse in both the short and long term.

Until last week, some staff at ULHT have been forced to work up to 16-hours shifts on account of being redeployed and having to travel to different sites, sometimes at short notice; at serious risk to their own health and that of their patients.

All healthcare workers want to do their bit to save human life, especially during a this pandemic, but healthcare workers are human too; they require time to eat, rest and recuperate in order to function properly.

Taking into account travel times between ULHT's three main sites (Lincoln, Grantham and Boston) staff who have to travel between them for twelve hour shifts should only be spending ten hours of this working on the ward because the other two hours would be travelling to and from the site directly from home – an hour each way. While travel times can vary, this provides a baseline for the majority of staff and is supported by The working times regulation which clearly states that: "An adult worker is entitled to a rest period of not less than eleven consecutive hours in each 24-hour period during which he works for his employer."

Following support from UNISON, affected staff raised their concerns with the Trust and have given notice of their intention to work only within their 12 hour shift, including travel time.

In response, management referred to the Trust's SBAR which states that clinical staff may work 7.5 hours shifts if they feel unable to work for 12 hours and said they would look into why working hours agreed between the Trust and the unions had not been adhered to.

Taking Care of Care Home Workers

It would be a tough call to make right now, but some of the bravest healthcare workers in the country must surely be those working in the private sector and in our care homes in particular.

It is no secret that in many care homes PPE is next to non-existent, and while this is not, in itself, always the fault of the employer, UNISON is urges all employers to be open and honest with staff about their plans to use the stocks of PPE available to them and how and when they plan to get more. If you feel like you are being put at risk, or your employer is being reckless or unreasonable, please do not hesitate to get in touch with UNISON using the details on the front page.

To add insult to injury some employers in the private sector have been refusing to furlough staff (i.e. pay 80% of wages in line with the government's Job Retention scheme) and coerc-

ing them into taking Statutory Sick Pay, which, let's remember is a miserly £95.85 per week.

At this point in time, we do not know how long this outbreak is going to last and if this situation is allowed to continue during the weeks and months it is expected to last, it could result in severe financial hardship for our members.

This is despite the fact that private sector employers are entirely eligible to claim for furloughed workers from the government scheme.

To be clear, UNISON is willing to all action, up to and including legal action to protect the interest of it's members, and we are and will be perusing all such cases to ensure employers honour their obligation to look after their staff and to pay them properly, whether they are or not they are shielding, clinical staff, admin or housekeeping.

If you believe you are being unfairly treated, or your employer is being unreasonable on PPE, pay or any other issue, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the details on the front page.

Are Your Details Up To Date?

Have you changed employers or workplace recently or changed your name, email, telephone or address?

If so, did you remember update your details with UNISON?

If your details are not up to date, you could miss out on important information on;

- Industrial action consultations (up to and including strikes)
- Election ballots
- Newsletters and more.

Plus, if you ever need our help, having accurate information can be absolutely critical as sometimes we may need to send you documents and statements which you need to see and may require your signature or consent. If your details are not up to date, it can cause unnecessary delay and inhibit the progress of your case, and it could see you lose out.

Fortunately it is very easy update your details: just go to my.unison.org.uk and log in using your membership number and password and as always, if you are having any difficulties logging in or updating your details, please contact the branch using the details on the front page.

Thinking of becoming a Rep?

Get in touch at: lincshealthbranch@gmail.com

We'll put you in touch with your local Lead Rep, who can guide and help you to become a workplace representative.

Not a member yet?

Join online at <https://join.unison.org.uk/>

